

**United States Senate**  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

October 21, 2010

**Via Electronic Transmission**

William A. Hawkins, III  
Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Medtronic, Inc.  
710 Medtronic Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55432

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

I appreciate your response to my requests on April 29, 2010 for financial disclosure forms and Medtronic payments to specific physicians. Over the last six years, the Committee has made inquiries into various aspects of the drug and device industry, including consulting arrangements, and industry funding for Continuing Medical Education (CME). Along with Senator Herb Kohl, I pushed the passage of the Physicians Payment Sunshine Act, which was signed into law this year.

I am writing to follow up on information Medtronic, Inc. (Medtronic/Company) submitted to the Committee on Finance (Committee) on Dr. Stephen L. Ondra, who President Obama appointed as the Senior Policy Advisor for Health Affairs for the VA on May 10, 2009. According to Medtronic, prior to joining the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Dr. Ondra received payments for consulting services and speaking engagements in 2007 and 2008, as well as, more than \$3 million in royalty payments in 2008, while he was Director of Spine Surgery at Northwestern University. Additionally, Dr. Ondra was the principal investigator or active participant on six recent studies focusing on the spine. Each of these studies was funded by Medtronic Sofamor Danek.

As you may be aware, I recently wrote to the VA Secretary Eric Shinseki regarding Dr. Ondra's prior relationship and any current involvement or interaction with Medtronic. While Dr. Ondra was not an employee of Medtronic, he acted more or less as an agent of the Company when promoting and speaking about medical devices on its behalf. Dr. Ondra's relationship with Medtronic not only benefited him financially while he was practicing medicine and representing Northwestern University, but it also appears to have been a factor in getting him the position as Senior Policy Advisor for Health Affairs at the VA.

Thus, in the interest of transparency, I would appreciate your response to the following questions and document requests. For each question, please respond by repeating the enumerated question and following with the appropriate answer and documentation.

- 1) Since his appointment to the position of Senior Policy Advisor for Health Affairs in May 2009, has Dr. Ondra had any contact or communications with Medtronic? If so, what is/was his level of interaction with the company?
- 2) Please provide copies of all emails between Medtronic and Dr. Ondra from January 2009 to the present, including emails sent to Dr. Ondra's Comcast email account. Previous submissions from Medtronic to the Committee show that prior to Dr. Ondra's appointment to the VA, he communicated with Medtronic using his Comcast account.
- 3) Does Medtronic have any policies regarding communications and interactions with senior officials and other employees of the executive branch, who were former Medtronic consultants or contractors? If so, please describe those policies.

In cooperating with the Committee's review, no documents, records, data or information related to these matters shall be destroyed, modified, removed or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation on this matter. I would appreciate your response to my questions by no later than November 4, 2010. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Angela Choy at (202) 224-4515. Any formal correspondence should be sent electronically in PDF searchable format to [Brian\\_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov](mailto:Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member